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A Nineteen Year's Review.

THE WOMAN'S BOARD OF MISSIONS OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1880-1899.

By Mrs. J. C. McClurkin, Ex-Corresponding Secretary.

"What a privilege to have lived during the revival of 1300," a co-worker once said to me, as she reviewed the history of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. "A far greater privilege to have lived and labored eighty years later," was my answer. Our grandmothers, the mothers, wives and daughters of those great men, who laid the

foundation of our denomination, did their part faithfully and well, but to the women who have lived and served since 1880 was given the greater privilege of actually carrying the bread and water of life to those who have never heard the sweet story of Christ's love.

One year more of service will mark the close of our second decade, and it is with thanksgiving that we glance at the work of our Woman's Board of Missions, noting some of the results accomplished through its agency.

We are not forgetful of the fact that prior to the organization of this board, women in different places were considering these things, and that several local so-

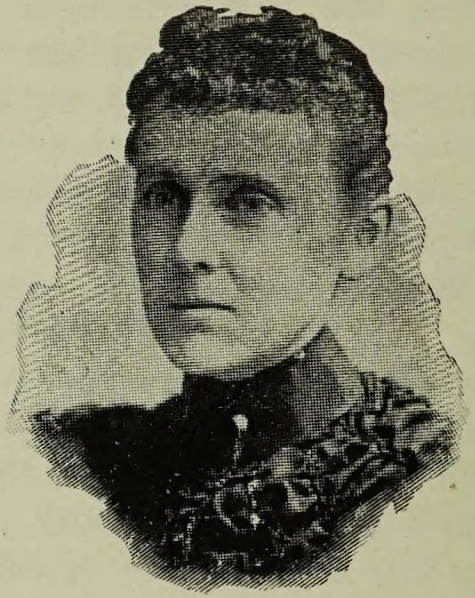
1878-9. cieties had been formed, remitting funds through the Assembly's Board of Missions, or perhaps in some instances through the American Board. Many of us had friends, members of other denominations who were laboring in the Orient, and when we met in our

various church gatherings we talked of the work they were doing, and it was thought that what has been done can be done, and that if our sister churches could support representatives abroad, so could we.

Openings Abroad.

But a plea coming from the Hails, our first missionaries to Japan, for female helpers, was the beginning. Their earnest words aroused a deep interest in the hearts and consciences of those reading them. The Spirit prompted action and it was with no small degree of confidence and assurance of success that W. J. Darby, D.D., and the ladies of the First Church of Evansville, Ind., invited a meeting of the women of the entire denomination to convene with the General Assembly in that city in May, 1880, to confer regarding the organization of a Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, which at the close of the first decade was changed to the Woman's Board of Missions, including work both home and foreign.

MISS ELLA GARDNER.
Japan.



MISS SALLIE ALEXANDER.
Japan.

Seventy-five women present! Of course their hearts' desire was accomplished, and those who had a part in the services of those May days, will never forget the precious hours; the inspiring words of Mrs. Rhea and Mrs. Sturgis, who having each labored on mission soil, spoke from rich experience. Yes, the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions was organized, and Evansville, Ind., decided upon as the most suitable place for headquarters. It is interesting to note that Mrs. A. M. Drennan, the third missionary adopted by this board, was a member of the Committee on Permanent Organization.

May 27, 1880.

Of the seven women chosen to serve as members of the board, four are still living. One of these, Mrs. Darby, has had the joy of continuous service since the organization. Three have heard the Father's "Well done," and have entered into "the cloud of

Original Members.

witnesses." Later the members of the board were increased to nine, and as our leaders have fallen other names have been substituted, those who form the present board as well as a number who served for a limited term. We would be glad to mention all the faithful women identified with this work at present, and especially those of early years, when such service was not so popular even as it is now. Some have gone to the front, some moved out of the territory, while numbers have reached that better country. Down through the nineteen years we come, and how we would gladly linger in memory over many sacred experiences, but a review limited to a few hundred words forbids. On that 27th of May, 1880, Mrs. R. B. Ruston consented to lead us, if the women of the church would give her their support; and with faithfulness she served as President for eleven years, resigning when obliged to leave Evans-

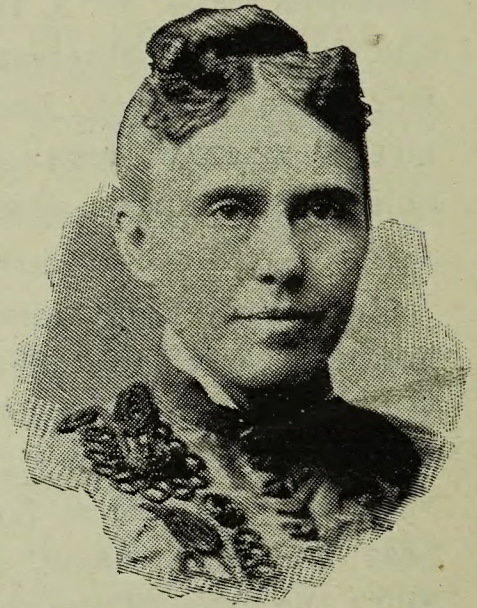
Presidents.

ville. She has since been known to us as President Emeritus. Mrs. W. J. Darby was chosen to fill the vacancy and during the nineteen years of her connection with the work she has left her impress. Surely we have been blessed when we recall the fact that our leaders have been able to continue so long with us.

Treasurer.

Mrs. N. A. Lyon, chosen Treasurer at the organization, is now at work in Japan; yet it seems but yesterday since we heard her present her second financial statement at the annual meeting in Bowling Green, Ky., with her characteristic earnestness and enthusiasm, the total receipts being $2,894.52. Since the close of the third year's work, the one filling the office of Corresponding Secretary has also acted as guardian of our finances.

MISS JENNIE FREELAND.
Japan.



MRS. G. W. VAN HORN.
Japan.

The office of Recording Secretary has been held by five different women, Mrs. A. M. Castlen, the present workman, having continued longest in service. The work of the Corresponding Secretary has been looked after by four women, one holding the position two years, another ten; Mrs. Anna Forsythe Farr working two years and Miss Hollingsworth, our present Secretary, five years. It is to the reports presented from year to year by these women that we who write history in coming days must refer. How little the average auxiliary member understands of the anxiety, and the labor —physical and mental, which these women must endure. At the close of the second year's work, it seemed necessary to make a division of labor so that the office of Foreign Secretary was created. Mrs. D. S. Ragon, who by the way was the first Corresponding Secretary, also became the first Foreign Secretary. This position has been held by Mrs.

Secretaries.

J. E. Williamson for the past eight years. To the daily demands of varied and even extensive correspondence, home and foreign, through all the years, these different secretaries have responded with promptness and efficiency. The life of each member of the board is so interwoven with the work that they all form a part of it, and each has had her place and part in lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes.

Mrs. Darby cared for our first editorial work as a few pages had been kindly given us by the Assembly's Board

Printers' Ink.

in the "Missionary Record." After a few years it seemed best to combine this with the work of the Corresponding Secretary, which arrangement continued until about 1892, when the services of Mrs. A. G. Bergen, of Mattoon, Ill., were secured. She is still in charge of the Woman's Department of the "Missionary Record." One of the brightest missionaries we ever sent

forth was the children's paper, the "Missionary Banner." Its life was short but its influence is still felt. It was edited by Mrs. D. M. Harris, who has ever been a staunch friend and helper for woman's work. The "Monthly Topic" leaflet has had its place, while thousands of leaflets on varied missionary subjects have been sent out since those little messengers of our first year's existence.

Auxiliaries, Etc. through 18 States. The synodical and presbyterial officers have had a large share in the development of the work of this board, for without them and those who bear the heat and burden of the day in auxiliary societies, the sum total would be smaller.

First Missionaries. In each annual report, since 1882, has appeared the name of Miss Julia Leavitt, she and Miss Alice Orr, now Mrs. J. W. Laughlin, being our first representatives to Japan. More than seventeen years' continuous service makes Miss Leavitt our oldest

MISS JULIA LEAVITT.
Japan.

MRS. N. A. LYON.
Japan.

missionary, though other missionaries are older in years. The societies now pledged to our work number 835, with a total membership of 10,412. These are distributed

Home and Foreign.

Dependent on our Woman's Board are our missionaries with their native teachers and Bible women. These consecrated lives find their daily work among all classes in different climes, from the mountain districts of our own land to our Mexican neighbors, on to the red man's wife and children, not passing unheeded the Chinese of America as we cross the Pacific to Japan and China. We have been identified with boarding and day schools, Bible training classes, medical and kindergarten work, etc. During these nineteen years, twenty-five different missionaries have been sent out, thirteen to Japan, one to China, four to Mexico, five to the Mountains of North Carolina, one to the Indian Territory, one employed in Chinatown, San Francisco.

One second to review the work of almost two decades, and to look back at the dollars and cents which have passed through the Woman's Board these 228 months. The total receipts are $191,296.38. The largest portion has been given by Auxiliary societies, still a large amount came from Young Ladies' societies, Mission bands, Christian Endeavor and Junior Endeavor societies, with individual gifts. Yes, some came from the mission fields, the missionaries themselves giving of their allowance.

Receipts.

The list of life members numbers 212. Some are in the harvest field to-day, while others have been called to higher service. These women pledge their prayers and hearty support along all lines to the Woman's Board work. As I look back over a few years of service as treasurer, I wish all might see as I see, for to me these figures represent not simply paper,

Life Members.

silver and gold, but heart gifts. We recall loving letters enclosing small amounts; sometimes a few pennies, left by the little one whom the Father had taken to himself; again the earnings of a seamstress. We still have in our possession a little red box, which was found after the owner was not, for God had taken her, marked for the Woman's Board and containing a single gold dollar. Often, very often, it has been a long cherished keepsake. Yet many women have given largely of their abundance, while others have left legacies great and small—they being dead yet speak. Had we thought of God's great goodness unto us? During all these years not one of our representatives has fallen. A wonderful record. A wonderful blessing!

Other Helpers.

Even before our first young ladies set foot on Japanese soil, the wives of our missionaries were planning as our helpers, and all along, the co-workers sent out by our Assembly's Board have given ready

and no one excepting those who have experienced such service can know of the varied duties to be performed. This "line upon line" work has been greatly blessed and results are not difficult to count. But in giving a "snap shot" of "other helpers," I cannot forbear mentioning one whom we ought to name "everybody's helper," Miss Lula Durham, the Board's stenographer. As a sweet-spirited, efficient, faithful worker, she has few if any equals. The name of Mr. S. B. Sansom, auditor for seventeen years, must have a place in the history of this work, and though limited space forbids the mention of his many excellent qualifications, we consider his fund of patience inexhaustible. The fascinating story of the work accomplished on mission fields has been given year after year by those fresh from the front, who speak as eye and ear witnesses. And how delightful to note the eagerness with which a missionary returns to her field after a sojourn of a few months in Ameri-

ca! We heard of one saying that "no queen ever went to her coronation with more joy than I return to my work." I should overlook an important factor in the advantages of this work, did I fail to mention its influence on the women at home. How our hearts have been enlarged and our vision broadened. We have learned our neighbor's needs, and extended a helping hand.

Is it any wonder that a work so far-reaching in influence should have enkindled enthusiasm in the hearts of women and stirred into flame every gift of God within her? Think of information diffused, church interests and loyalty quickened, sympathies deepened, views broadened. They used to fear we would be "very unsystematic" and perhaps not "plan intelligently," and as to "book-keeping," well, that was a question. Nevertheless we close these nineteen years with a work as thoroughly organized and systematized as any to be found within denominational walls; but

through it all, we have many times had to stop looking backward and forward and look up to Him who has been our guide and counselor from the first moment of our existence.

The annual conventions have always been meetings of great spiritual power, and as we look at our yesterdays we thank God anew for this far-reaching work, stretching out its hands to all classes, leading from darkness to light, and we realize that it is only when the "mists have rolled away" that there will be revealed unto us the fullness of the spiritual growth, the joys unspeakable, the hallelujahs that have arisen to Christ, the world's Savior, during these years of service.

Such, briefly told, are a few of the results of that organization which bears the name of the Woman's Board of Missions of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Evansville, Ind.